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The missionary as government agent on the Eastern Frontier: 1818-1830

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Chapter IV

The Inception of the System

In February, 1816, Lord Charles Somerset had permitted Joseph Williams to proceed beyond the boundaries of the Colony (1). There seems little doubt that Somerset expected much of Williams. He was used as a medium for summoning Gaika to conferences with the Governor (2). Indeed, in the eyes of Colonel Cuyler, there was no doubt about Williams' role; as early as 1815 he had expressed his hope to the Colonial Secretary that

> "by good management on the part of the missionaries ... the Kaffers may be in time brought to that station to be quiet and useful neighbours" (3).

Cuyler - whose constant battle against the disruptive influence of missionaries in his area of jurisdiction seemed to have produced a chronic antagonism to all missionaries - demanded information about thefts by Kaffirs, was quite willing to hear complaints against the colonists, and even suggested that Williams write a weekly letter (4). Hereupon Williams reacted as one would expect someone to react who believed that even if Government control was a sine qua non of missionary activity in Kaffirland, at least it should not be regarded as the sole function of missionaries (5). He told Cuyler that he had no secular authority and could not afford the expense

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(1) C.O. 4638, p. 262, Colonial Secretary to Read, 14th February, 1816.
(2) Philip, II, p. 169.
(3) C.O. 2599, p. 37, Cuyler to Colonial Secretary, 25th May, 1815.
(4) Macmillan (B.B.B.), p. 60.
Macmillan's description of Williams as a "semi-official Government Agent" is correct. Williams did not receive a salary from the Colonial Government (See above, p. 49).
(5) Cuyler must have pressed Williams very hard indeed to cause Williams to describe himself as "a slave of the colonial authorities for the sake of peace" (Philip, op. cit., p. 177). Cuyler's behaviour towards Williams, as recorded in Williams' Journal shows a positive hatred for missionaries who were unwilling to plough the same furrow as the Colonial Government (Philip, op. cit., pp. 176-179).

of regular communications (1). Whereupon Cuyler seems to have indicated that unless Williams helped to control thefts he was not serving any useful purpose and reported him to the Governor for harbouring runaway Hottentots (2). It appears that the whipping-boy of Hottentot labour was being used again, this time for the purpose of forcing the Governor to take heed of Cuyler's complaints. Somerset's visit to the frontier during April, 1817 was not, however, solely or even mainly due to Cuyler's complaints regarding Williams (3). Such complaints may have been an ancilliary motive.

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(1) Macmillan (B.B.B.), p. 60.
Another explanation occurs to one while reading the manuscript letters of Williams. Williams was obviously not well educated and writing seems to have been an imposition. On the other hand Williams did keep a Journal which seems to indicate that communication by written word was not an unpleasant task. One is forced back to the conclusion that Williams did not wish to play the dual role of missionary and "semi-official" Government Agent.

I have not had the opportunity of examining Joseph Williams' Journal, but however accurate the reporting may be (on Philip's verification with Lieut-Colonel Fraser (op. cit., II, p. 167)) no letter of Williams' which I read in manuscript allows me to believe that the style Philip uses is that of Williams. The Journal has obviously been edited.

(2) Macmillan, op. cit., p. 60.
(3) Somerset's real motive was the deteriorating situation along the frontier (see above, pp.32ff; also: Philip, II, p. 173). This contention is adhered to in spite of the fact that Somerset admonished Williams not to connive at the desertion of labour from the Colony (Philip, op. cit., II, p. 173). Somerset's reactions in connection with the situation at Griqua Town precludes this obvious motive. He was interested in the relationship of runaway labour to law and order, fundamentally (See above, pp. 32 ff).

Interest in the religious aspect of Williams' mission was not a motive for the visit to Chumie. Towards the end of the interview with Williams Somerset asked him to what society he belonged. This question seems to indicate that Somerset showed a remarkable lack of interest in the religious aspect of the mission, for Williams' appointment must have passed through his hands hardly a year ago, in view of the interest Somerset showed in controlling the frontier, and with the L.M.S. in the forefront of affairs. The only conclusion one may reach is that all missionaries in Somerset's view were instruments for frontier control and not promoters of the Gospel, except in as far as the dissemination of Christianity was associated with Civilisation and thus an ultimate means towards order (See below, pp. 53 ff).

The extracts from the Journal give the date of Somerset's interview with Williams as 1st May, 1817 (Philip, II, p. 171). Somerset, however, returned to Cape Town by 21st April (Theal (Records), XI, p. 303, Somerset to Bathurst, 24th April, 1817). There is no evidence of another visit by Somerset to the frontier during May. Williams was apparently mistaken about the date.

During the course of Somerset's interview with Williams, the latter had occasion to indicate that he regarded Kaffirland, and therefore the mission station, as being beyond the pale of civil control by the Colonial Government:

> "... this is a land where every one is his own lord. The inhabitants go and come where and when they please; and I am neither a captain or a landrost to call them to an account, were I ever so disposed; for when men are in this land, they are beyond the bounds of civil control ..." (1).

If he were to call them to account, Williams observed, he would not only be endangering his life but would cause himself to be regarded as someone who had come to "entrap them" instead of preaching Christianity (2). Apparently Gaika's people had not forgotten what they had been told about van der Kemp (3). It was the Grique Town dispute all over again. That Somerset did not immediately assail Williams is remarkable, and his calm demeanour is no indication of what he thought or felt (4). More than a year later his pent-up feeling burst out in a letter to Brownlee penned by the Colonial Secretary: Williams was "timid and illiterate" and bitter disappointment was expressed at his deficiency for the task he had undertaken (5). There seems little doubt that the "task" referred to was being a Government Agent in the fullest sense of the word. Somerset had realised his error in allowing missionaries into Kaffirland without having emphasised his instructions sufficiently, and when Williams died in August, 1818 (6), his death gave Somerset an opportunity of rectifying his error.

The very length of Somerset's communication to John Brownlee, Williams' successor, indicates that Somerset considered the matter

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(1) Philip, II, p. 178.
(2) Ibid.
(3) See above, p. 5.
(4) It may be that Somerset was so contemptuous of Williams that he felt it would be a waste of time to expound on law and order to someone so inadequate (See below, footnote (5)). The way in which Somerset took Williams aside and spoke to him (Philip, op. cit., pp. 178-179) seems to imply that he regarded Williams as a child.
(5) Theal (Records), XII, p. 119, Colonial Secretary to Brownlee, 30th December, 1818.
(6) See above, p. 38.

extremely important, and there is hardly an eventuality not accounted for in the letter; it is most specific in its demands and must be considered to incorporate the principles to which any other missionaries who wished to proceed to Kaffirland should adhere (1). But once again Somerset was to learn by bitter experience the impropriety of merely issuing instructions. In the case of Williams the instructions had followed after Williams' appointment; Brownlee was presented with a comprehensive dissertation beforehand. When Brownlee failed to please through recalcitrance the last resort was to single out men who expressed a desire to co-operate with the Government; men who did not consider that the offices of missionary and Government Agent were incompatible.

John Brownlee landed at the Cape in January, 1817, in company with other distinguished names in the missionary annals of South Africa (2). Shortly afterwards, however, he resigned from the London Missionary Society due to the internal ills which were besetting the Society at the time (3). Thereupon he

> "consented to occupy one of our (i.e. L.M.S.) stations, giving up his connection with the Society, and to receive a salary from Government" (4).

His letter of appointment from the Colonial Government merits considerable attention, for it is perhaps the most important document in the evolution of the office of the missionary as Government Agent on the Eastern Frontier.

> "There is perhaps no circumstance connected with the interests of His Majesty's Government in this settlement that His Excellency the Governor feels more anxiously alive to than the introduction of Christianity among our unenlightened neighbours, and with it its invariable concomitant and greatest of temporal blessings to a people, 'Civilisation'" (5).

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(1) Theal (Records), XII, p. 116, Colonial Secretary to Brownlee, 30th December, 1818.
(2) Du Plessis, pp. 154-155.
(3) Macmillan (C.C.Q.), p. 94.
(4) Quoted in Macmillan, op. cit., p. 94, from the Draft Record of Synod (1817) in the Records of the L.M.S., London.
(5) Theal (Records), XII, p. 118, Colonial Secretary to Brownlee, 30th December, 1818.

These words form part of the introduction to the letter, and apparently, therefore, are the most important wishes of Lord Charles Somerset. But we have already had sufficient evidence to prove that the introduction of Christianity, as such, was not the first motive of Somerset, at this stage of his Governorship, in spite of the numerous occasions on which he had paid lip-service to the ideal (1). Yet, in this paragraph Somerset was being more truthful than on many other occasions, for this is probably the only letter in which he almost admitted publicly that it was Civilisation, and not Christianity which was his basic concern. The belief which Lord Charles Somerset nurtured for the value of Civilisation as such may have been small, but there seems to be little doubt that he regarded it as a useful instrument for bringing tranquility to the frontier, if it worked hand in hand with a subservient missionary.

What are the roots of Somerset's belief that through Civilisation the Kaffirs would be rendered peaceable? When Britain's first colonial Empire was shattered there began to develop a belief that it was Britain's

> "supreme mission to civilise the world by means of her far-flung Empire" (2).

This, Knorr points out, may have been coincidental, but it was less coincidental that this new line of argumentation grew rapidly at the time when many economic arguments in favour of colonisation and colonies were being discredited by the economists. The growth of this belief is an integral part of the new humaniterism spirit which was rousing the English people (3).

> "From its very beginning the manifestations of this new imperial sentimentalism revealed the existence of genuine feeling of concern for the lot of the coloured peoples and a deep sense of duty" (4).

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(1) e.g. pp. 34, 51 , above.
(2) Knorr, p. 246.
(3) Ibid.
(4) Ibid., pp. 246-247.
Knorr points out that there is a possibility that in advocating Civilisation that England was rationalising her motives and actually promoting trade: he quotes Sydney Smith: "The savage no sooner becomes ashamed of his nakedness, then the loom is ready to clothe him, .." (p. 247). There seems, however, to be little doubt what Somerset's motives were in advocating Civilisation.

By the time Dr John Philip wrote his "Researches in South Africa" it had become the accepted mode of thought that Civilisation followed in the train of Christianity (1); it was, as Dr Chalmers put it, "a never-failing collateral" (2).

But Philip discouraged the idea - perhaps with Somerset in mind? - that missionaries should concentrate their energies upon Civilisation to the detriment of promoting Christianity (3). While

> "Civilisation and social order never fail to grace the train of genuine religion (4), ... this (the civilising work of a missionary institution) is not the main object of such a institution. It is not the end; it is only the accompaniment" (5).

Once again it appears as though Philip was hinting at Somerset's exploitation of missionaries when he maintained that

> "It is not by using religion as an expedient to promote the temporal interests of man, that we gain even that object; but it is by using her as the means of promoting the elevation of the soul ... 'Religious institutions are the channels, if I may use the expression,' says an eloquent writer, 'by which the ideas of order, of duty, of humanity, and of justice, flow through the different ranks of the community'" (6).

Such sentiments were precisely those which appealed to Somerset: Civilisation as a means towards order on the Eastern Frontier could be one method of solving a very real problem. And fortunately Christianity and Civilisation were so closely linked that in promoting one the other was countenanced (7). One could cheerfully be hypocritical in one's protestations without giving overmuch chance of being outrightly outrageous by openly negating the dominant fervour of the age. But it appears that Philip had observed the tendency towards prostituting religion by countenancing missionary activity under Governmental control.

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(1) Philip, II, Chapter IX.
(2) Quoted in Philip, op. cit., p. 360.
(3) Ibid., p. 360.
(4) Ibid., p. 358.
(5) Ibid., p. 360.
(6) Ibid., pp. 360-361.
Nearly forty years later the same problem was being discussed. At this time Holden thought outrightly that "the business of the missionary was not to civilise" (p. 484).
(7) It also makes the determination of Somerset's true motives difficult (See below, p. 58, footnote (4)).

It may well be that, in one's preoccupation with showing how Somerset's antipathy towards missionaries and missionary institutions developed until 1819 as a result of their witting or unwitting attempts to elevate themselves to independent principalities within the autocratic regime, one imputes to Somerset a harsh outlook which need not necessarily reflect his true feelings. Perhaps, like Moodie, he believed that the missionaries were working from a faulty premise. It was Moodie's belief that Hottentots and Kaffirs could only be converted through the medium of Civilisation.

> "... for it seems quite impossible to make them comprehend the doctrines of the Christian religion, or to give due weight to the evidence on which it is founded, without previous education, and long-established habits of reflection and reasoning on abstract subjects" (1).

Moodie continues:

> "It is a very common opinion that the civilisation of barbarous races can be effected simply by converting them to Christianity ... There can be no doubt that Christianity brings a people to a much higher degree of civilisation than they could attain without its aid; but I believe no instance can be produced of its raising a nation, or smaller society of men, from barbarous or savage condition to a state of civilisation, without the active operation of other causes ... Before Christianity can be understood or received, the mind must be previously opened and enlarged by civilisation and education" (2).

It seems that there was a distinct hierarchy for Moodie. First came Civilisation and then education; but how was Civilisation to be inculcated?

> "They (the missionaries) may teach them to read, and tell them to work, and cover their naked bodies by means of the produce of their labour; but this is not sufficient. They must acquire new wants before they will toil for the means of gratifying them. To excite these wants, a common trader can do much more than the most laborious missionary, simply by exhibiting his wares, explaining their uses, and the quantity of labour required to purchase them" (3).

And here Moodie was in agreement with Lord Charles Somerset. For Somerset Civilisation started when an artificial want was created

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(1) Moodie, II, p. 282.
(2) Ibid., pp. 285-286.
(3) Ibid., p. 288.
As early as 1803 an opinion had been expressed at the Cape that commerce was a great agent for civilising the Kaffirs (Van Pellandt, p. 19).

and "profitable and interesting" intercourse between the Colony and the Kaffirs manifested itself (1). From this dependence would, apparently, spring the other benefits of Civilisation, graduating perhaps to the more refined level of education. But where Moodie was prepared to argue that without Civilisation there can be little Christianity, there seems no doubt that Somerset was prepared to accept the more conventional theory that Christianity and Civilisation were handmaidens, and to use one was to drag the other along with it. Colonel Bird, who, through his intimate acquaintance with Somerset, must have known his ways of thought, wrote to J. Baird on 4th December, 1818;

> "His Excellency holds it to be incontrovertible that religion is the best basis of civilisation, and that little progress will be made in the latter where the former is neglected or thrown aside" (2).

Whether or not Somerset sincerely believed in Christianity as such, we have already discussed. But for us how he used Christianity is of greater import.

It is only by bearing in mind Somerset's desire to promote control of the frontier, partly through Civilisation, that an understanding may be reached of Somerset's policy, which cannot be dismissed as a "half-hearted experiment with a 'neutral' belt" (3). Somerset believed, like many others, that increased trade with the interior tribes would promote Civilisation (4). It was for this purpose that he established fairs to be conducted twice yearly at Grahamstown (5). When the reduction of the garrison and the new outbreak of violence in 1818 forced him to change his idea of "mutually beneficial" communication with the Colony and substitute, for the time being, a strip of "neutral" territory which would be empty initially and which would gradually be filled by colonists and civilised Bantu, it became necessary to have the missionaries who had been allowed in Caffraria on sufferance, under a more

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(1) Theal (Records), XI, p. 307, Somerset to Bathurst, 24th April, 1817.
(2) Ibid., XII, p. 85, Colonial Secretary to Baird, 4th December, 1818.
(3) Macmillan (B.B.B.), p. 44.
(4) Theal (Records), XI, p. 307.
(5) Ibid.

complete control; thus they would operate as the eyes and ears of the Government and civilise at the same time so that at some future stage Civilisation would have "lifted" the Kaffirs so that they ceased their "predatory habits" (1) and order was established (2).

For Lord Charles Somerset Christianity was the means of obtaining security on the frontier, and here he was but following in the footsteps of those who had gone before him along the same road, placing "administration before salvation" (3). If Somerset entertained a desire for disseminating Christianity before 1819 (4) that desire was strictly subordinated to the striving after the solution to the problem nearest his heart.

And fortunately the missionaries who proceeded into the interior during these seminal years of missionary contact with the Kaffirs, held the same general principles, although their task was to save souls and not to promote administration. Whatever conflicts arose between missionaries and Government at this time were not occasioned by differences in connection with the theory that Christianity and Civilisation went hand in hand: missionaries believed this as sincerely as did Somerset (5). Conflict arose not on the score of motives, for Somerset was largely indifferent as to whether Christianity or Civilisation was being inculcated, providing the process contributed towards frontier tranquility. Conflict arose from the Government attempts to exert control over the missionaries while they performed their labours.

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(1) Somerset's comment in Rose, p. 85.
(2) See above, p. 55, footnote (8).
(3) The Critic, Vol. III, No. 1, October, 1834, p. 50.
(4) Occasionally one gets a glimpse of what may well have been Somerset's belief that the missions were achieving spiritual values in spite of the fact that they were the proverbial millstone about his neck as far as his authority was concerned. After March, 1817, Kaffir prisoners taken in skirmishes were to be sent either to Uitenhage or Bethelsdorp (1) to be "instructed in the first principles of our religion, after which it is His Excellency's wish to return them improved to their own country." (Theal (Records), XI, pp. 319-320). This may have been a mere expedient, however, for want of knowing what to do with prisoners. This type of evidence makes it very difficult indeed to arrive at a completely conclusive analysis of Somerset's spiritual tendencies.
(5) Coates, pp. 336 ff. Question 1101, pp. 340 ff, Questions 1116-1117, Evidence of William Shaw. For fuller observations regarding the relationship of Christianity and Civilisation the full text of Coates (which is an extract from the Select Committee on Aborigines) should be consulted.

Therefore, returning to Somerset's instructions to Brownlee, we may take with the proverbial pinch of salt Lord Charles' professions that he felt it his duty to give every aid in his power for the diffusion of the principles of Holy Religion as a

> "humble means of recovering some few from the deplorable darkness in which they are still lamentably plunged" (1).

The remainder of the letter leaves no doubt as to the more important purpose of sending Brownlee into Cafferland.

> "... independent of the gratification a liberal and feeling mind must experience from having it in his power to aid in spreading the arts of civilised society among hordes still in a state of the greatest barbarism, His Excellency is convinced that he shall better consult the immediate interests of the settlement committed to his charge and put more easily a stop to those inhuman massacres and ruinous plunderings which take place on our border by complying with the wish of the Caffer Chief to have a zealous and enlightened instructor sent to replace Mr Williams, than by acts of hostility towards the offending Caffers" (2).

Mr Williams, as far as Somerset was concerned, had shown deficiency for the task which he had undertaken.

> "Timid and illiterate, Mr Williams appeared to waver and hesitate upon every occasion, which perhaps arose from his being accountable to superiors far distant, ignorant of the relations existing between the colonists and their neighbours, and who might not perhaps approve of his acting in any instance except under their own immediate instruction" (3).

Nevertheless, Gaika had expressed his confidence in Williams and had lately made him the organ of "much friendly intercourse with the Colonial Government", and with the view to carrying on this intercourse so that it might be of mutual benefit to both colonists and Kaffirs, Somerset appointed Brownlee to take his place (4).

Somerset's indifference to the things of the spirit is revealed by the brief way in which he left religious instruction to Brownlee's discretion, desiring only

> "regular and correct information of the progress made by the Caffer people" (5).

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(1) Theal (Records), XII, p. 119, Colonial Secretary to Brownlee, 30th December, 1818.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Ibid.
(4) Ibid., p. 120.
(5) Ibid.

With the religious consideration briefly dismissed, there followed an imposing list of secular duties. It was Brownlee's duty to impress upon the Chiefs not only the friendly feeling of the Colony towards them, but also that the frontier should not be violated by either colonists or Kaffirs. Information was required as to the exact wants and the objects which the Kaffirs could bring to Grahamstown to barter, Somerset's object being

> "... to establish such an intercourse between the Caffre people and the Colony as shall be mutually beneficial ....." (1).

Somerset continued:

> "There is great reason to believe that notwithstanding the long intercourse which has subsisted between the Colony and the Caffres the information we possess is very incorrect and inadequate, it will therefore be a most important object of your leisure, to collect as much information on these points as possible and to furnish the Colonial Government therewith. The strength and position of the border chieftains, their relations to each other and the peculiar features of their social compact, are subjects of the greatest moment to be correctly informed of. We wish also to be in possession of their mode of culture and the treatment of their cattle, in short, it will be highly interesting and instructive to have by degrees the most minute details of their economy" (2).

Brownlee was required to pay particular attention to Gaika. This chief had professed loyalty to the Colonial Government which recognised his authority. Using Gaika, Somerset wished

> "to form from thence a system of interior control among the Caffers themselves which shall have the effect of keeping them at peace with the colonists" (3).

Any change in "Caffer policy or in their interior relations" must be made known to the Colonial Office, and Brownlee was expected to correspond

> "from time to time, both with the Magistrate of Graaff Reinet and the officer commanding the frontier, in order to their obtaining through you easily

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(1) Theal (Records), XII, pp. 120-121, Colonial Secretary to Brownlee, 30th December, 1818.
(2) Ibid., p. 122.
(3) Ibid., p. 123.
The wording of this sentence in the letter seems to imply that it had been the wish of Governors prior to Somerset to create a system of "interior control". In view of the theme of this investigation, however, and the evidence available it does seem that a wrong impression is created if this is the case. It had certainly been the traditional policy of Governors to treat with Gaika (see above, p. 37, footnote (8)) but only to Somerset can be imputed the genesis and development of a scheme of "interior control" (see below, p. 82).

> information on such points as you may judge to be for the good of the service generally; in other respects and relative to the several subjects of this instruction, it is His Excellency's desire that you should correspond directly with the Governor's Secretary ...." (1).

It was also necessary for the Government to be informed of

> "such colonists as may enter the Caffer territory or keep up a communication with the Caffers through other than the permitted channels",

and that the Kaffirs be induced to discourage the acceptance of deserters, "soldiers, slaves, or Hottentots", from the Colony (2).

If more space is indicative of importance then by this time not only the cause of disseminating Christianity without ulterior motive but also the question of runaway labour from the Colony have been relegated to insignificant proportions. Obviously the function of the missionary was not only to civilise to promote order, but to act as a relay station to the Government, informing them of the minutest details of the movement and organisation of the Kaffir tribes. The information was to allow the Government to have at its finger-tips the necessary data to conclude a successful campaign should hostilities break out once again. The remainder of the information would give the Government a clear picture of the social and economic organisation of the Kaffir tribes and this would allow for the organisation of trade and intercourse with a greater flexibility than had hitherto been taking place; and this would assist the promotion of Civilisation and subsequently order. The irruption into the Colony in 1819 had not yet occurred to change any ideas which were in the air for continued intercourse between Colonist and Kaffir.

I find no record that Brownlee ever put pen to paper acknowledging that he would abide by these demands. He proceeded to Kaffirland knowing what was expected of him and settled on the Gwali River in June, 1820 at a point fifteen miles further inland than Williams

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(1) Theal (Records), XII, p. 123.
(2) Ibid.

had been stationed (1). Whatever disputes there were about the exact frontier line, there is no doubt that Brownlee at the Chumie missionary institution was beyond the colonial frontier (2), in the truest sense an "extra-colonial" mission and it therefore became part of the pattern which was rapidly maturing for frontier defence.

It is obvious by the favour with which the Government eyed Brownlee that great store was set by his future task; the "fair expenditure" attending his first settlement at Chumie was defrayed by the Colonial Government (3). The attitude of Government as displayed in the correspondence to Brownlee is wholly different to that accorded to William Shaw's application in January, 1818, to proceed beyond the frontier. Undoubtedly the functions of a missionary were "sacred and important", as Donkin put it, but Kaffirland was closed for the time being to any who did not submit to the Government creed (4).

Brownlee's letter of appointment was written in December, 1818, but he did not move into Caffraria until June, 1820. One of the reasons for this delay must have been the Kaffir irruption into the Colony which occurred in 1819 and the embargo this event placed upon movement along the frontier. It has been noted that every facility was granted to Brownlee largely because the Government had assumed that he had indicated tacit agreement to the Governmental requirements. Bathurst agreed with the principle of Government control. He did not object to additional members of the L.M.S. proceeding to the Colony

> "it being distinctly understood that they are in no case to proceed beyond the frontier without your Lordship's permission and are again to

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(1) G.M.S.Q.I., 1840, p. 1.
The hostilities of 1819 occasioned a change in Gaika's place of habitation. Previously he had been situated at the Kat River in Kaffirland; after 1819 he moved to the Chumie (Tyumie) basin (Theal (Records), XIV, p. 106).
(2) See above, pp.
(3) C.O. 4843, p. 27, Colonial Secretary to Brownlee, 21st July, 1820.
(4) C.O. 4843, p. 15, Colonial Secretary to Shaw, 27th January, 1820 See undated letter in Macmillan (C.C.Q.), p. 126: "You have no other way of getting into Caffraria at present" (Philip), i.e. unless one became a Government Agent.

> return within the Colony on intimation from you to that effect" (1).

And this carte blanche was used by Somerset to the fullest extent to control the frontier from the area of Griqua Town Southward to the sea, while the remaining area to the West provided the necessary outlet for missionary enterprise not likely to disturb the general tightness of control on the Eastern Frontier.

Dr Philip was aware of the conditional nature of the missionary office in Caffraria, but at the time he was friendly with both Somerset and Donkin (who took up office in January, 1820, and relinquished it in December, 1821 (2)), and was prepared to accept the position and make the best of it while fighting constantly for the removal of the conditional prohibition (3).

It behoves one to say a few words about the general way in which the Governorship of Sir Rufane Donkin fitted into the pattern which Somerset had built up. It may be said that with regard to the control of the Eastern Frontier through the missionary agency there were no significant changes. On the 8th January, 1820 Philip wrote to the Directors that

> "Colonel Bird still objects to our sending missionaries beyond the Colony. He is very polite and friendly - but I will not, I trust, compromise one particle of duty to please him or any man on earth ..... The General (Donkin, who is to act for Lord Charles Somerset) is very friendly and favourable, but can hardly make any alteration in the system of Government" (4).

Herein lies the clue to the continuity in policy pursued with regard to the particular aspect of Government under consideration. Colonial Secretary Bird saw eye to eye with Lord Charles Somerset on the question of extra-colonial missionaries and the necessity for not only controlling them but diverting their functions into utilitarian channels (5). It was he who, even after Donkin had been prevailed upon to lift the ban on extra-colonial missionaries (6), continued

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(1) Theal (Records), XII, p. 107, Bathurst to Somerset, 22nd December, 1815.
(2) Walker (History), p. 130.
Donkin did not alter the policy commenced by Somerset (See below, p. 64).
(3) See above, p. 62, footnote (4).
(4) Quoted in Macmillan (C.C.Q.), p. 127.
(5) Ibid., p. 128.
(6) See below, p. 64.

to rigidly enforce the requirements demanded by Somerset when appointing Thomson and Bennie to Caffraria in 1821 (1). Whether Bird believed Somerset's doctrines independently or whether he was forced to acquiesce (2) does not concern us; the continuity of policy does. Not many years afterwards the Commissioners of Enquiry were cautioning against the influence which the Office of Colonial Secretary had accrued unto itself, and decried the nature of things which

> "have tended to give him an influence in the Colony equal, and sometimes superior, to that of the Governor himself" (3).

Under the circumstances Somerset could rely upon at least some of the vital aspects of his frontier policy remaining untouched (4).

Sir Rufane Donkin, "towards the middle" of 1820, was prevailed upon by Philip to lift his prohibition of missionaries entering the interior (5). The "only surviving account" of the episode was to have been found in the Philip papers:

> "At his request I dined and spent an evening with him (Donkin) alone, when the matter was the only subject of discussion. At eleven o'clock P.M. Sir Rufane rose from his seat, and, taking me by the hand, he said 'I am satisfied, I shall write an order to Colonel Bird tomorrow morning recalling the order'" (6).

But this change in policy by Sir Rufane Donkin, in view of the inclinations and influence of the Colonial Secretary, does not seem to have effected any significant alterations, and when Lord Charles Somerset returned and protested against various changes which had been made by Sir Rufane, it is significant that he said nothing about his change of policy towards the missionaries.

That the Colonial Secretary should have played an important part in maintaining the control over the missionaries after the

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(1) See below, pp. 67 ff.
(2) He was a Catholic and therefore held the post on sufferance (Bird, p. 28).
(3) Theal (Records), XXVII, pp. 354-355.
(4) For a short discussion of the Donkin-Somerset relationship on the return of Somerset to the Cape, and for a discussion of some aspects of the alterations perpetrated by Sir Rufane, see Key, Chapter 2. Key, however, makes no mention of the aspect of frontier control which is the theme of this thesis.
(5) Macmillan (C.C.Q.), p. 125.
(6) Ibid.

prohibition was lifted certainly accounts for Somerset's silence on the subject. But there is an event, which occurred in 1819, just prior to the departure of Somerset to England, which merits attention, if not serious consideration, in explaining Lord Charles Somerset's attitude towards the change inaugurated by Donkin.

Robert Moffat had persuaded Afrikaner, the villain of the Northern Frontier, to accompany him to Cape Town, and there Somerset met them (1). The effect upon the Boers of Afrikaner entering the Colony is well illustrated by the reaction of one colonist on being convinced that the "former bugbear of the border" actually stood before him in Moffat's presence. "O God, what a miracle of thy power! what cannot thy grace accomplish", he cried (2). Somerset himself at first received Moffat's story with "considerable scepticism", but, being convinced that Moffat had persuaded Afrikaner to accompany him

> "was evidently much struck with this result of missionary enterprise, the benefit of which he had sometimes doubted .... Whatever he might think of his former views, His Excellency was now convinced that a most important point had been gained; and, as a testimony of his good feeling, he presented Afrikaner with an excellent wagon, value eighty pounds sterling" (3).

It is conceivable that this incident had the effect of ameliorating Somerset's temper towards the missionaries; it may have convinced him that Christianity, as such, was beneficial in curbing excesses on the part of people such as Afrikaner. Therefore, in view of the fact that Bird had held the helm steady while Donkin was making alterations, Somerset saw no harm in allowing further missionaries across the frontier, seeing that they contributed towards the tranquility of the frontier by virtue of mere Christian teaching instead of studied inculcation of Civilisation as he had

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(1) Moffat, p. 178.
(2) Ibid.
(3) Ibid., p. 179.

planned (1).

This incident may not warrant the stress laid upon it; but often small events influence the lives and subsequent actions of people although they are not stressed afterwards, in public or private correspondence. It is included as a suggestion.

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(1) On the other hand as early as 1817 Somerset had given indications of a dormant belief in the value of Christian teachings without necessarily using these same teachings for ulterior motives. See above, p. 58.

Moffat, however, did not seem to set much store by Somerset's Christian intentions, as the extract on p. 65, footnote (3), seems to indicate.